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Siam

BIBLE WORK IN SIAM

FROM THE
ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTH ANNUAL
REPORT OF THE AMERICAN
BIBLE SOCIETY



MR. IRWIN'S CLASS AT CHIENGRAI

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SIAM

The Siam Agency was established in 1890. The circulation is mainly in the Siamese and Lao languages, though a considerable number of Chinese Scriptures are used to reach the Chinese in Bangkok. Some of the Siamese Scriptures are printed and published in Bangkok and some in Japan, and part of the Lao Scriptures are printed in Chieng-mai and others in Japan. Besides these languages, there is a scattering distribution in fifteen other languages. The total circulation for the year 1919 was 90,264 volumes, which is a decrease of 57,088 from last year's output. The total circulation since the establishment of the Agency, which has completed twenty-nine years of activity, is 1,810,196. The Agency Secretary is the Rev. Robert Irwin, with headquarters at Bangkok, Siam.



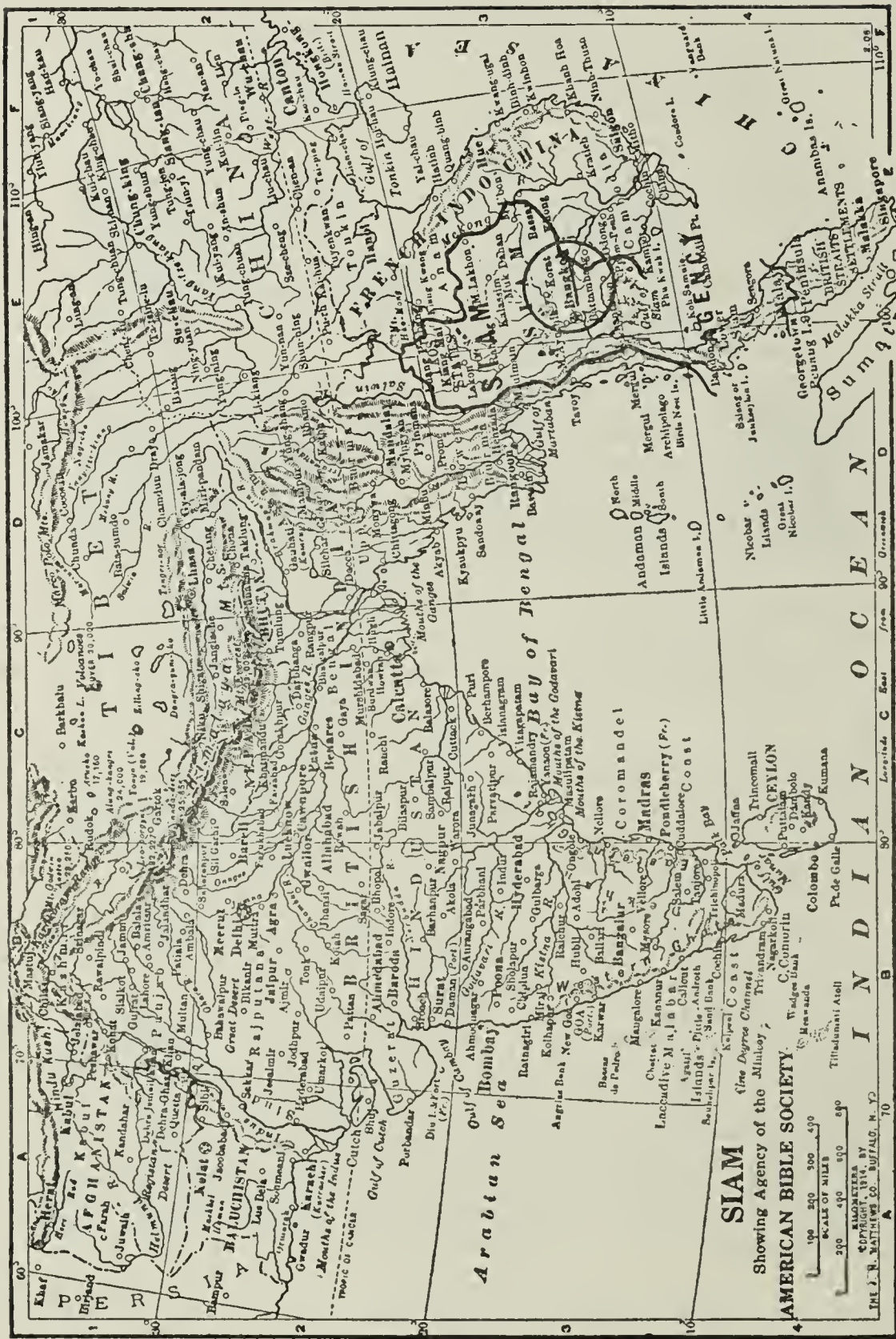
GOOD for thought abounds in this report. Fundamental questions are raised and answered at the outset. Such pertinent subjects as whether it is the East alone that is "unhustleable," and the vital importance of the life and actions of westerners, whether missionaries, merchants, or officials in the East, are frankly faced. House-to-house visitation undertaken during the year throughout a whole district; provision for and progress in the training of colporteurs; pushing forward into new and difficult fields; and the preparation of Scriptures in various languages and suitable forms, together with instances of individual fruit from this work, are some of the important matters reported by Mr. Irwin, the reading of which will bring encouragement, as well as stimulate thought.*

Ought the Scriptures to Be Translated and Donated?

Recently a correspondent of the *Bangkok Times* severely criticized the Bible Societies for translating the Scriptures into the vernacular tongues and distributing them broadcast. Some missionaries have expressed sympathy with his views so far as the large amount of free distribution is concerned. It is therefore incumbent on us to defend the method or change it for a better. We are open for suggestions. In the meantime we are to attempt to prove two propositions: First, that it is proper to translate the Scriptures into all languages and dialects and to distribute them, in whole or in part, to every person who can read; and second, that it is proper under certain circumstances to distribute the Scriptures at an excessively low charge, or at no charge at all.

Translated? Yes!

So far as translation into vernacular speech and the spread of the



SIAM

Showing Agency of the Mission

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Book among the common people are concerned the history of civilization becomes our ally. William Tyndale, roused by the neglected condition of the people of England and the indifference and ignorance of the clergy, declared that he would make it possible for the plowboy to know more of the Bible than the prelate. Before long, half a dozen translations of the New Testament flooded the country. Everybody read them and, as Green's History of the English People tells us, the nation was reborn to a nobler life. Something of the same kind of movement took place throughout Europe. Instinctively, the people felt that the Book fitted their needs as the bark fits the growing tree, and that there were those in power who were peeling the bark from them. See but yesterday the multitudes of every nation under heaven in the trenches "eagerly reading the New Testament" each in his own language, or listening to it. "Nobody is ashamed to be seen reading the New Testament" is the record that comes from different sources. To-day, in this land, Chinese coolies, Siamese farmers, uncouth mountain hunters, gather in groups to read, listen, and discuss the wonderful story of their family relation to God. Why should it be thought incredible that He intended the Book for them?

Some one suggests they will misread it. Who is to decide that? If the Bible, read, pondered and followed, makes men and nations better, stronger and more manly in every way—and it is certain it does—then it is a good and proper piece of work to translate it into every tongue and to put it into every man's hands, and only he who has some ulterior object to gain will object, or hinder.

Donated? Yes, at Times

As to the second proposition that it is proper to give away Scriptures, it is not contended that such a method is anything other than a temporary measure to create an appetite for them. It is, to use a business idea, advertising by sample. There is practically no gratuitous distribution among the Siamese of Lower Siam now. There used to be, but the people now want the Scriptures and are willing to pay for them. The Chinese, great readers, almost everywhere buy their books. The Lao of North Siam and the Leu and Shans have not yet come to want books badly enough to pay for them, and it is good business to coax them a while longer. "It's our language," eagerly cried a crowd of the Sip Sawng Punna people as one of their number took a small book and began to read in a loud voice. The entire village clustered about him, and he read the whole story of Ruth. The visitor to Lakawn has a pleasure coming to him if he run across a group of the illiterate Kamu squatting by the roadside listening to Ah Siang reading from his Kamu Epistles of Peter. A half dozen booklets judiciously placed here will probably mean a little school or class within a year or two, and a whole tribe will take a step upward. It is just a matter of doing what you can. Better a man were not born than do nothing. If some one can find a better method, the way is open. The Bible Societies will gladly follow.

The Law of Stability

There is a philosophy of the stability of nations and individuals who live according to the Bible principles, and it is in harmony with the law of nature. In Exodus 23: 20 ff. Moses was given the open secret of success—follow the Angel. It is perfectly clear that “the nation that will not serve thee shall perish”; because it sets itself, either in ignorance or willfulness, against the law, as a child might set itself against a railroad train. A nation is strong as it conforms to the Bible principles, and weak as it departs from them. The whole long history of Israel is given just to demonstrate that truth. History is strewn with dead nations, like leaves in a forest, to become soil and fertilizer for a richer and larger life of humanity. The process, however, is more than natural, will-less evolution. It marks failure. Those nations might have lived, grown greater and blessed the world in a nobler way. Dying, they bequeathed us an idea or a lesson, the value of which we must painfully work out for ourselves. How much greater the value had they lived it for us! They lost their soul through disobedience to eternal law. Germany may become one of the latest examples of this sad truth. This is plain to the real “Bible reader,” but how shall the nations and peoples know the truth except it be brought to them in their own tongue? To expect them to receive it through a missionary or a priest in another language is as hopeless as to attempt to bail out the ocean with a teacup, or to build a modern city with a child’s play blocks. The other way—to translate and distribute the Scriptures, even by gift—is feasible, sensible, and successful.

What is Holy?

But does it not degrade the Holy Scriptures? What makes anything holy? Nothing is holy in itself, but only as it ministers to the need of man; whatever does that, is holy. “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath,” is Jesus’ concrete way of stating the truth. Abstractly stated, it would read, “Everything was made for man and man was not made for anything else in the world.” Humanity, personal, national, racial, is sacred, destined to become lord of the universe, and every created thing must be made to minister to his preparation for the exalted position. “Thou hast made him but little lower than God; Thou hast put all things under his feet.” To so revere the Bible as we would a precious vase that must be kept out of the children’s reach is to rob it of its power and defeat its purpose as effectually as if a people should, out of reverence, keep their monarch locked in his palace lest contact with common clay should defile his majesty. Both Bible and monarch were made for common clay—to turn it into imperishable grandeur and greatness.

The Joyful Life

The New Testament is the record of the most joyful life ever lived. Christian Science has no patent on joy, nor have Faith cults on abiding peace. Jesus told his disciples, when persecuted, to “rejoice and leap for joy,” as though difficulty and grief were the necessary conditions for happiness; the deeper the darkness the more radiant the light. It does not

mean that happiness grows from grief, nor that light leaps out of darkness. The great shining sun above is the inexhaustible source of light, and the secret of happiness lies in the soul's contact with God. Sorrow, persecution, disappointment, are the occasion for the triumphant growth of the finer graces, but not the cause. Most adults are, as Emerson says ("The Conservative," p. 330), "very foolish children who, by reason of their partiality, see everything in the most absurd manner and are the victims at all times of the nearest object. . . . Our experience, our perception, is conditioned by the need to acquire in parts and in succession, that is, with every truth a certain falsehood." It ought not to be so. There is no excuse for having to acquire a certain amount of falsehood with the truth. Jesus never did. It is due to willful neglect to look at things as they are, to a growing laziness of mind to think; an absurd taking for granted and jumping to quick conclusions. The sun in our heaven, and the greater suns beyond that, seem so far off and so common that we scarcely notice them. We fail to see that they are the most fundamental facts in the universe and in our life. Failing to see that, it is not strange that we neglect the Book that instructs us in the arts of shining and enjoying. Eternal life, about which the Bible has so much to say, is not merely stretched-out existence, but the quality of God's life of love, joy, and peace, unending because founded on truth, justice, and kindness. As the bee, to get the sweetest honey, must have a long mandible and must sink it deep into the heart of the flower, so simplicity of spirit and fellowship with God will enrich our lives with the sweetness and fragrance of heaven. "I came that they might have life and might have it more abundantly," in ever richer measure. Why then should any of us fail to reach the sunny heights of superb and normal manhood, and stand shoulder to shoulder with Him who was called the Son of man?

The Christian Paradox

But why all this emphasis on the Bible? Such teaching is not confined to this particular book. Why not make the Bible one among the others? The chief reason is that the Bible, unlike other books, makes God supreme and man subordinate, and it shows his will for our conduct and character. Not only that, but it opens the way to their attainment and furnishes the requisite inspiration and energy to travel that way to the goal. It is the way of the denial of self, the surrender of our will to the control of another, and willingness to follow his directions in everything. But, that's slavery! Yes, but consider who the master is and what his purpose is. The Master is Jesus Christ, God's Son, who loves us with an everlasting love and whose object is not to get all he can out of us, but to "work in us," to present us faultless, and to enable us to work out for ourselves happiness, success, and an assured future—the very qualities all are striving for.

Righteousness Exalteth, Sin a Reproach

The evidence that this is no fairy tale is abundant in the lives of nations and men. The great outstanding lesson of history is that "right-

eousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Christian nations have died, and some are dying; but the cause is that they refused or neglected the plain teaching of the Bible, which they professed to follow. The Bible teaches the one method of attaining real manhood that has been found to work. Many other methods have been tried and in the pinch failed. Instead of slavery, this is found to be freedom. Instead of losing our life, we find it. We surrender our will only to exercise it in an effective way. The Bible is our best friend when it teaches that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." He who refuses goes downward and, sooner or later, wakes up to the realization that he alone is to blame for failure. It is not an arbitrary act of God, but the law of nature that the Bible points out. We therefore can urge the Bible on all mankind with a good heart.

Christianity—International Goodwill

I wish we Christian missionaries could make some adequate expression of our faith, which is, as Fosdick ("Challenge of the Present Crisis," p. 94), says, "international goodwill." It is not our business to attempt to force on the Siamese and Chinese a religion they hate, or to change their customs nor to introduce among them anything of a divisive nature, except as the truth divides good from evil. Jesus' commission to us was to proclaim the gospel, and that gospel he summed up in the one idea of the kingdom of God—God the Father and King of all mankind, a Family in which all men, without respect to race or nation, are children, and so brothers and sisters, on the one condition of allegiance to Jesus Christ, God's representative on earth.

It is an idea so vast and far-reaching that few of us get even the vision, much less proclaim it by word and life. In other times it has had a different expression; to-day, owing to the world catastrophe, it surely spells "international goodwill." Physical force is futile; but genuine brotherliness to individuals, maintained over years, will conquer the nations. It is recorded, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," and Christians, missionaries, doctors, merchants, and others, are to determine when that day of power shall dawn.

Catching the Vision

Our call, therefore, to the Christian element in Siam is to catch the magnificent vision and become international in spirit, and our call to the Siamese and Chinese and other nationals in this country is to catch the vision of your own prophets and religious leaders, and to ponder the probability that these are along the same line as Christianity, and need the living Christ to fulfill them. Let us all get away from the idea of antagonism. That will never bring us anywhere. And let us, as the apostle exhorts, "put on, as the elect of God, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another." We are bold to declare, as Christ himself did, that he came not to destroy anything good in the law and writings of prophets, but to fill them out into their full intention and to give men a righteousness that is not

merely external, but that is hearty and joyous; that unlocks the latent energies of soul and body which nothing else can do; and that inevitably projects itself into the everlasting future—for nothing good ever dies.

In the nature of the case, the message has to be given to individuals and small groups, and men have to be won one by one; but we should never lose sight of the nations and the new humanity that is to be and for which individuals and nations exist and grow. Jesus' idea of the kingdom is that it grows like a plant into a tree with widespreading limbs, and that it blends its members into a homogeneous and heavenly spirit, as leaven unites the myriad particles of flour into a loaf of bread. Can anyone read the story of our thousands of years of life and not see the direction of the current that way? Clan has grown to tribe, tribe to city-state, city-state to nation-state, nation-state to federal-state; and the logical issue of to-day's movement, as Myers ("General History," p. 748), points out, would seem to be the world-state. Humanity seems to grow like a child. It learns and refuses to learn by the things it suffers; stumbles under a load of things it tries to carry; is bewildered by the multitude and strangeness of its experiences; yet light-heartedly and inevitably pushes its way up to manhood; for *man* persists, though *men* die.

The Need—"An Influx of Idealism"

What this and surrounding countries need is "an influx of idealism," as Emerson ("English Traits," p. 118) has it. "Where that goes is poetry, health, and progress." "An invasion of armies," says Victor Hugo, "can be resisted; an invasion of ideas cannot be resisted." Character is built on ideals, but as the archbishop of York reminds us, "ideals will not care for themselves." We have to foster them and to help one another to live up to our ideals. We who were forced by circumstances to stay by the staff need to catch the spirit of those who went to the Front and, in turn, stimulate them to the same heroism in the long drawn-out, every-day struggle with evil. "This is a sphere," says Professor Leonard, of Bristol University, "in which everyone of us may play a part."

"We Can if we Will"

Somehow, people expect us missionaries to be superior to others. Let us take it as an honor and a spur. We need not shut our eyes to the difficulties in the way of carrying the gospel to all parts of Tailand with its Babel of tongues. Caleb could see the enormous difficulties in the way of winning Canaan as well as the other spies, the walled cities, iron chariots, and mailed warriors; but still he knew they were able to go up and take it. What is needed in our case is the determination to do this work, and then set about finding the way to do it. Just to say, "We can't do it till we get reinforcements," is ignominious failure. Anybody could do it if he had plenty of forces and ideal conditions. This calls for extraordinary men—what missionaries are supposed to be. What we want to see, is that it is the task of us missionaries on the field to devise measures for the spiritual conquest of all the people within our territory, and begin to do it. That is what we were sent here for. The

church in America cannot do it. The Boards cannot do it. They sent us here to do it. They will stand back of us with forces and supplies. If they should fail, we at least have done our duty. The great forward movements in the Christian world, one cannot view them without applause and a desire to take a part in them. Will they succeed? That will depend on the Christian world itself. Russel H. Conwell says: "Success has no secret. Her voice is forever ringing through the market place and crying in the wilderness, and the burden of her cry is one word—WILL." The haystack "We can if we will" has become a scientific commonplace. To will, however, is actually to know the problem and to get down to work it out. Anything else is to stand, like the street loungee with hands in pockets and jaw hanging loose, gazing at the job. "The great enterprise to which Jesus summoned his disciples, consisted in the secure establishment of a certain way of living throughout the entire human race. It is a way of living characterized by three elemental features. It is a life in which every man looks up to God as his Father, with a growing assurance of the reality and nearness of a vast unseen world of which he is a part; a life in which, in the midst of the day's work, every man looks out upon all other men with a kindling desire to work with them in all possible ways and at any cost for the common good; a life in which each man in the midst of the day's work, looks forward with a growing expectation of immortality, to the endless life in which he will work together with a multitude of others in the ever-changing universe of God" ("The Christian Witness in War"). Here is opportunity of a very sublime order—fellow-workers with God, training ourselves to work with whomsoever fortune puts alongside us, and seeing the universe take ever new forms under our master strokes. There is much in modern life to encourage us. For instance, a recent editorial in the *Bible Society Record* says: "There is evidence that men everywhere are turning to the Scriptures again for light upon the complicated problems of our times. And perhaps there was never a period in which the opportunity was so great for pressing home upon the minds of the people the value of this great book, not only as a revelation of spiritual truth, but as setting forth a social order of things that would meet the most exacting requirements of our exacting age."

Christianity Indigenous to the Orient

So, too, the nations are now aware that no one liveth—or dieth—to itself and, if not lessening their selfishness, they are giving a helping hand to the small, weak, and backward nations in political and industrial matters. But politics and industry, like everything else, are beneficial only when based on sound morals and religion. The missionary teacher and colporteur now, theoretically at least, take rank with the diplomat and trader. A recent number of *Asia* devotes a long article to an acknowledgment of the debt that the Orient owes to the Christian missionaries, and the October, 1919, number of *The Ladies' Home Journal* has an article entitled, 'And Forty-Five Missionaries,' showing how they have profoundly affected China for good. We have a right to expect that,

led by the logic of events and a growing acquaintance with their inner worth, the strong governments of the world will soon take a direct interest in commending Christianity to the more backward peoples. There is nothing more friendly they can do for the Orient than to show that they are in hearty sympathy with the cause of foreign missions, and back such sympathy by an exhibition, in action, of the justice and brotherly spirit taught by the Bible. If all the representatives of Christian countries living in Siam and China had these two qualities, there is little doubt that so real a Christianity would be welcomed by all those peoples. Christianity is indigenous to the Orient. We of the West are slowly learning it. We need to give it to the Orient that they may come to their true and full life, and that they, in turn, may teach us its fullness. Both of us must receive and both must give. This is simply an extension of the principle of political and commercial reciprocity now so clearly recognized. We must give first of all the open Bible, for there is nothing that will so surely and speedily deliver any country or people from the evils that afflict it. It will either provide a direct cure, or stimulate inquiry until a cure is found. Discovery and invention are products of the Christian mind. We missionaries have no need for discouragement. We seem to be within sight of the goal.

Colportage for the Year

We have to report a much smaller distribution than usual—90,264 against 147,352 last year. Probably there is not an actual falling off; but, owing to furloughs, transfers, broken health, and deaths in the mission force, only a little over half of the supervisors have sent in returns of their work for the year. Thus, nothing has been heard from the great regions of the Shan States and the Sip Sawng Panna (in South China), Lakawn, and part of Chiengmai, and only the first three months' distribution in Chiengrai and Nan. Also some parts of the field in the North Siam Mission are ceasing to give away Scriptures, and sales will be few for a long time to come. We were short of Chinese Scriptures for several months and had to lay off colporteurs.

It is with profound sorrow that we are called on to star the names of three friends of the Agency from the Presbyterian Missions, all of them active on our behalf though not actual supervisors: C. J. Shellman, M.D., the Rev. W. A. Briggs, M.D., and the Rev. W. C. Dodd, D.D.

Prae Field—House-to-House Canvass

A special feature of this line of work this year, the first successful attempt of the kind, was the house-to-house canvass of the entire province of Prae, together with a section of Lakawn and another of Chiengrai embraced in the Prae field. Twenty-one men and four women were employed. Mr. Callender estimates the area covered at 2,000 square miles, with a population of 100,000, 315 villages and towns, and 13,867 houses. A little over 30,000 portions of Scripture were distributed, of which 1,605 were in Siamese, a few in Chinese and Western Shan. The rest were in Lao. The cost to the Society of the work was 1,485 *ticals*,

or \$557. The main work was done during the first three months of the year, some mountainous districts difficult of access being not finished till near the end of the year. We quote the following from Mr. Callender's very full report, itself taken largely from the lips of the colporteurs:

"The plan was to get as many as possible to distribute the Scriptures in order to create enthusiasm—which goes a long way towards successful missionary effort. None but Christians were employed, and we got the best available. Some were jewels, some were gems in the rough, and some were very ordinary material. But when the work is needed to be done, the best material available must be harnessed and sent forth. The plan involved bi-weekly conferences for those distributing in the Prae plain, and as often as practicable for those distributing at more distant points.

Some Experiences

"These conferences revealed varied experiences of the colporteurs. At some homes they were met with the fear expressed that reception of Scriptures might obligate them to pay out money later. Some were afraid that their children would be taken to the mission schools and forced to become Christians. Some said that to leave off making offerings at the monasteries would spell darkness to them. These offerings are more attractive than the Christian way because more demonstrative and sociable, as children are pleased with toys and bright colors. At some of the houses in the city the women colporteurs encountered opposition. They were ordered politely to leave, as their Christian teachings were not wanted. At some places in the out-villages the women endured great hardships. Not knowing where to lodge for the night, they would pray to be divinely led and they were not disappointed. At one village, just at night, one of the women said, 'I wonder where we can put up for the night; it is getting dark.' The answer came from one of the others, 'We will pray about it, and the Lord will prepare some house for us.' They were in the *sala* or public lodging-place, where it would not do for women to stay unprotected. Soon after prayer, a woman came down from her house near by and entered into conversation with them. The sequel was that she invited the whole party of four women to lodge with her that night and share her hospitality.

Welcomes

"Here is what the leader of one company of men has to say: 'We stopped at the house of the headman of the village and showed the pictures. (The colporteurs had stereoscope views, some on the life of Christ, many of different countries, besides a picture roll on the Life of Christ.) This was a large village, and we stopped there two nights. The villagers turned out well, including many monks. We admonished them and opened up the Scriptures for them to listen, day and night, and they listened attentively. We gave them Scriptures and they took them readily, without a criticism from a single house; and they invited us to return, for they understood.

"We proceeded to another village and arrived there at about four

o'clock in the afternoon. The headman of the village received us cordially, and we stopped at his house. We showed the pictures we had with us, at least fifty persons being present, including monks. I taught and distributed Scriptures, and it was pleasant, not a single house refusing Scriptures. We remained there nine days, for there were many houses; and we met and praised God in the use of hymns and prayer, and villagers said it was very pleasant, for they had never been accustomed to hearing such things.

Difficulties and Rewards

"After this, Elder Noi Neum and Loong Nan Tan went with us, and Kaao returned home. The rest of us went to a village exceedingly difficult of access on account of the mountains, there being five hills. On account of the steepness of the hills and the roughness of the road, some were not able to continue, being sore of feet. I comforted them with words of Scripture, telling them about the sufferings of our Lord, which were many times greater than we were undergoing. One person helping us to carry the books was not a Christian, and it was an opportune time to give him the gospel message. We finally reached the village in the hills about five o'clock in the afternoon, and abode there in one of the houses that night; and the next morning after breakfast we went to the *sala* of the monastery to distribute books, but the monks would not accept them. After the noonday meal we showed the views to the people, and all turned out, there being only seventeen houses in this village. We taught them the Scriptures and they listened well. The next morning every one accepted a portion of Scripture. In the evening we had a service, there being about sixty present, and they asked us to remain another night; but I replied there are many other villages to which we must go. From that place Elder Noi Neum and Nan Tan had to turn back, because the road was too difficult for them, one being sore-footed and the other very old. Me Noen and I persevered and found the road very bad indeed, being overgrown with tall jungle grass, which had to be parted with our hands all along till we reached the next village, where we arrived about eleven o'clock. We went to the *sala* of the monastery where we produced the pictures to show the people, and the whole village turned out and listened well and requested us to remain two or three more nights; and that when we return in the future we need not bring anything to eat—so eager were they to have us return. At the next village the headman rang the gong, calling all the people together to hear our message, saying this village had never heard the gospel before.

The People More Ready

"In some instances, individuals who received the Scriptures raised their hands and bowed their heads in the attitude of worship. Some of the colporteurs say it will not be long before many of these people take a stand for Christianity. This drive in distributing the Scriptures has brought some interesting facts to the surface. One of these facts is that the bulk of the people are much more ready to receive the gospel

message than they were a year ago. Another fact has appeared, viz.: there is an undercurrent of opposition which seems to emanate not from the common people, but from a higher source.

"All the Siamese and Lao officials were visited, and all the monasteries. To the three highest Siamese officials in Prae City was given each a New Testament in Siamese and to the three highest Lao noblemen each a New Testament in Lao. Two of the Siamese officials wrote notes of appreciation.

Let Your Imagination Loose

"This splendid piece of work done by the colporteurs has been made possible by the generous aid of the American Bible Society through their representative in Siam, the Rev. Robert Irwin, B.D., and we hereby extend our heartiest appreciation to the Bible Society and to Mr. Irwin."

It is difficult for those of us who have not been over the ground or done something of this kind of work, to appreciate what it means to cover the territory of a province and to enter every house in it. Remember these colporteurs went mostly barefooted and bareheaded, with only a shoulder bag and a long bladed knife, and that it is a mountainous country, whose roads are mostly lonely trails along bridgeless streams, with tiger and robber infested forests, and whose people are suspicious of every stranger. Unless we let our imagination loose, we are apt to suppose that these men have an easy time of it on their eight dollars a month. To one who actually thinks the matter out, these colporteurs are the real Peace Commissioners. A political League of Nations may bring a lasting peace, but there is no question of the peace built on the Book these men distribute. It looks forward to the time when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and lose the art of war. Slowly the idea is developing in the mind of the world, and some fine morning we shall waken to find it realized, and then these now unknown colporteurs shall have their reward.

Bangkok

Fewer men have been at work this year in Bangkok. Mr. Fuller, in charge of the Chinese missionary work there, has been closely engaged in pushing out along educational lines for the benefit of the Chinese people and, therefore, has had to cut down the number of his colporteurs through inability to superintend them. Only a couple of Chinese colporteurs have been steadily at work. One Siamese was at work in the city for half the year, but gave it up. We ought to have a dozen good colporteurs in the city, not only for Siamese and Chinese but for many other Asiatic peoples. It is a most cosmopolitan city and growing. A large number of Indians are accessible. Mrs. McClure tells of giving a Hindustani Bible to an Indian. A week later she met him and inquired whether he had read some of it. "All of it," he said. Incredulous, she questioned him on what he had read and he was able to tell her about the Old Testament characters and to show an intelligent knowledge of the New. He said, "Mem, I began at the beginning (pointing to the back of the book) and read to here (what to us would have been the

beginning). Now, my friend is reading it and all of them want it."

One supervisor writes, "Incidentally there is much seed sowing that cannot be collated in statistics."

Chiengmai Accomplishments

Dr. Campbell, in charge of all the evangelistic and colporteur work of Chiengmai province, has kept a number of men distributing throughout the feasible months of the year, and continues to write optimistically of the results of spreading the Scriptures broadcast. To quote him:

"Four new households are reported. One worker moved his sister's family two days' journey and set them down in a Christian community in order to have them become Christians. It is needless to report that the effort was blessed. Such efforts always are.

"There was one unique experience. A young man came to say that he and his mother and younger brother wished to become believers and desired a service in their house. He said they had been led to this decision some weeks before by reading the books given them by a man whose name he did not know. From the description and date I was able to identify the colporteur quite easily.

"During these three months 6,121 Scriptures were distributed. The men are distributing a little more sparingly than formerly, lest the supply be exhausted before the war conditions as to paper and printing have time to improve. . . . Eight more new households have become Christians. In Ampur San Maha Phone every house in the following villages was visited and Scriptures placed in every instance where the people were at home." Then follows the names of eight in that Ampur (district), and six in Muang Pao, and many more. "Also Scriptures were sent to Muang Pai six days west and Muang Hang six days northwest. Also the Muang Chem five days southwest and to other distant points. . . .

"An only daughter, seven or eight years of age, was taken in this epidemic. The bereaved parents told me how a few hours before her death she described the Heavenly City and seemed eager to go and urged them to join her there a little later. This seems to comfort them very much. They have repeatedly donated Scriptures to tell others of the same hope."

British Shan States Being Entered.

A recent letter from the Rev. J. H. Telford of the American Baptist Mission in Kengtung, British Shan States, gives the assurance that the mission will soon be reinforced to enable them to take up vigorous work for the Shan, or Keun, Tai people there. Heretofore the time of the two American families has been fully occupied with the hill tribes, and practically nothing has been done for the Tai. Among other things Mr. Telford says, "Our Mission is waking up to the need of the Shans and before long I think we shall have at least one additional family for the Shan people. Both Mr. Hanna and myself are now giving ourselves to the study of the Shan language, and I do not think it will be long before our Shan work is on the map so far as Kengtung is concerned. . . . I hope that when you visit Kengtung the next time you will see us in action with

the Shans. We hope to concentrate on them with our biggest guns and with every legitimate means of warfare, that we may bring to naught the seemingly insuperable barriers that have thus far forbidden the establishing the kingdom of God among these interesting Shan folk."

Eastern Siam Untouched

Nothing has yet been done in eastern Siam, the Mission feeling unable to undertake any new work without additional men from home. The need however is just as great as ever and it would seem as though the receptive attitude of the people would lead the South Siam Mission to enter the field even at the expense of some of the existing work.

French Territory Closed

The French territory east of the Mekawng is still closed to evangelistic and Bible work, except three cities along the coast and the single province of Cochin-China.

Who Live in Glass Houses

Kipling made us acquainted with the unhustleable nature of the East, but we are sure now that the fault is not with the eastern peoples. Here, for instance, is one of the leading nations of the West positively forbidding Christian teachers to enter this southeastern empire, and refusing to allow Christian literature to pass through the mails. Here is the American Presbyterian Church allowing year after year to slip away without lifting a hand to help the four millions of Siamese in the eastern half of Siam and with just the beginning of work in the Yunnan field, though continuing to acknowledge its responsibility for the evangelization of the Tai people. And here again is the American Baptist Church, laying claim to be the teachers of the eastern Shan States and, after twenty or more years, just proposing to begin to do something for the Shan people. Let us Westerners quit throwing stones and exchange our glass walls for something more substantial. The American Bible Society has had workers in all these Tai fields, but it is like pouring water into a hole until the Missions co-operate by permanent occupation. We have challenged the Missions to mobilize their native forces and put their churches on a war basis in order to make a determined advance in all these countries, and we have a standing offer to provide them with as many colporteurs, under their own control, as they have evangelists. We believe it is as practicable for us to trust God and the home church who sent us to do this work, as for our boys who went to France to trust the President and the country to provide all they needed to win the war. It is not that we have unlimited funds in hand. We might be hard pressed if the Missions should accept our offer. We as well as they, and business, and politics, and war, and everything else human, must walk by faith.

Training Colporteurs

The quality of our colporteurs improves very, very slowly. Moral growth is always slow. We ourselves have nothing to boast of in the

matter of spiritual attainments. All we can say is that we are trying to improve and trying to help our colporteurs along. It is a good deal to be able to say that some of them are trying to improve both in character and work.

Orientalists in Siam are very different from us in their ideals of work. We want to get the job done; never mind how, so it is right. They do not see that it makes any difference whether the job is done or not. Then, their manner of life and control has been such that they have little or no initiative. Mr. Callender, who has handled large numbers of colporteurs this year, has this to say: "The colporteurs are so timid and fearful lest they do something the missionary may not approve. Their caution may be a good sign, but it does not represent the best method of progress and speed in getting the work done. In some cases if the men would just exercise more judgment and go ahead, it would save time and also money."

Ai Noi of Chiengrai, Mr. Bachtell's cook, is a sample of the opening of mental power and aggressive energy by the gospel. He learnt to read and now is interested in the study of the Scriptures. He misses no opportunity to attend classes. He volunteered this year to go to Luang Prabang, in French territory, as a colporteur whenever the French give permission for us to enter. This result is not an impulse, but a process covering a number of years. It is noticeable that the brightest faces are the ones that have been studying the longest; some of the beginners are dull and dark.

Training classes for colporteurs have been held throughout the North Siam Mission as usual with gratifying success. The attendance has increased considerably and there is a more intelligent interest in the subjects presented. Two booklets on Co-operation with God have been prepared and printed in the Lao language and taught to a number of churches and classes. These deal with Prayer and Our Tasks. A third series is almost ready for the press on Self-Discipline. The same three series are translated into Siamese and will soon be printed. All of these studies deal with the development of the individual life. Another series, in preparation, deals with the social side of Christianity and the unity of the church. We have kept four men in the Mission Training School throughout the term at an expense of five hundred *ticals*. To meet the need that is soon to be thrust upon us, if progress is to be made at all, we must increase our training both in quantity and quality. Man power is the demand of the hour, and there is only one way to get it, and that is by training.

Pushing Forward

Following the inquiry of our New York office as to the probable expense of "doing our part of the work in South China" and the suggestion of an advance in 1920, we entered on a vigorous and continued effort to secure enough capable men to make a drive into South China, eastern Siam, and, if the way should open, into Luang Prabang, the capital of French Laos. Numbers of men volunteered for service, but, owing to the shortage of missionaries to superintend them and their own

excessive demands, no drive was attempted. The work done will make the next attempt easy, however. That a large number of men have learned to be willing to go so far away from home for several months, is success in itself. The North Siam Mission transferred the Rev. and Mrs. C. R. Callender and Dr. and Mrs. C. E. Park to Chiengrung Station in South China, and they are taking several coolporteurs with them—to stay, we hope.

In one of his tours, Mr. Metcalf, of the China Inland Mission, in northern Yunnan, found several Tai villages ready to give up their spirit worship for Christianity, and appealed to Chiengrung Station to send him a native teacher. The appeal was forwarded to the Mission and in response a young man went from Nan. Now his brother has gone to join him as a coolporteur, and both intend to stay there. Thus the Tai field of operations keeps on enlarging and demands an ever-increasing trained force of coolporteurs and evangelists.

With the vision of this growing need before us, we have kept steadily pressing on the churches their responsibility to distribute the Scriptures within their bounds, so as to release the coolporteurs for the far-away work. There is no doubt that they will do it in time. Conferences held in connection with the Bible Study and Coolporteur classes show that their consciences are waking and beginning to trouble them. They are getting glimpses of a nobler life than living for themselves. It was a happy five weeks' experience, in connection with our training work in Chiengrai, for Mr. Bachtell, going on furlough, to leave me in charge of the city church, and to have the session of five members undertake to conduct all the services and direct all the work of the church, including the pastoral visitation, evangelistic touring, and distribution of the Scriptures throughout their whole field—a section equal to several townships in America. A new day will dawn for the church in Siam when all of them undertake to do this as their regular business. It is not a question of *can*, but, as with most of our matters, of *will*. The real problem, in training these men, is to infuse morale into them. "It is morale that enables men to endure hardships, hunger and pain, to face death again and again and yet to keep on fighting. It springs from the spirit of the individual soldier and sailor. As long as he continues to be cheerful and to feel confident of himself and his officers, so long does the morale of the army and the navy continue to be strong. . . . That is why the soldier with a buoyancy of spirits is more valuable to a regiment than a squad of sharpshooters" (From "This Side the Trenches"). It is as true of coolporteurs and evangelists and ministers. Morale grows out of ideals, and ideals out of the Word of God kept soaking in the heart and practised in the life. As Milton said, "He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem." We missionaries and we American Christians have the task of our life in being first what we want the Siamese to be.

Preparation of Scriptures

The Scripture Revision Committee of the South Siam Mission have

completed the revision of Chronicles I and II, and it is now on the press at Chiangmai. Revised Exodus is almost ready for the press. Psalms in Siamese has been printed. Malachi in Lao has been printed for the first time, and plates of a reduced size are being made in Japan.

The order for reduced plates of most of the historical books of the Old Testament in Siamese has been given the Fukuin Printing Company, of Yokohama, with the hope of producing this part of the Bible in one volume by the end of the year.

A second edition of the New Testament both in Siamese and Lao has been made, without margins to still further reduce the size. Without margins! What would F. W. Boreham say to that? In "Mushrooms on the Moor," he says: "I love a margin. There is something delicious, luxurious, glorious in the spacious field of creamy paper bounded by the black letterpress on the one side and the gilt edges on the other. Could anything be more abominable than a book that is printed to the uttermost extremities of every page? It is an outrage, I aver, on human nature. Indeed, it is an outrage on Nature herself, for Nature loves her margins even more than I do." But hold on, Mr. Author. Your instances of Nature's margins in flies and fishes and birdlings for cats and snakes to eat, and plants for browsing cattle, are not the only way Nature has. She has left no margins to her mountains, but piled them up thousands of feet in the air and stretched them continents long. She has left no margin to the earth itself, but packed it full inside, and nowhere is there such a profusion of things as over its surface. She does have a gilt edge, but she has put it on the shimmering sea, on the waving wheat fields, on the glistening sand and the glittering church spire. Nature adapts herself. That is what we are trying to do—adapt ourselves. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary cannot be carried comfortably in a man's vest pocket. By reducing the type and cutting off the margins it could be made portable. The Siamese Bible is about three-fourths the size of Webster's. Our endeavor is to get it small enough to be carried to church.

Donations

We take pleasure in acknowledging the following gifts to the Agency:

Pitsanuloke Church.....	Ts: 90.00
Sritamarat Church.....	46.04
Chiengrai Church.....	13.36
Lakawn Church.....	30.13
Prae Church.....	50.00
Rev. Allen Bassett.....	57.00
Mrs. C. B. McFarland.....	135.00

Issues, Additions and Circulation of Stock

Direct issues:

	Bibles	Test's	Portions	Total
From Bangkok.....		643	93,776	94,419
Prae.....		5	18,043	18,048
Lakawn.....		205	7,003	7,208
Chiangmai.....			2,900	2,900
Chiengrai.....			7,500	7,500
Total direct issues.....		853	129,222	130,075

Issues, Additions, and Circulation of Stock (Continued)

Indirect issues:

To other Bible Societies.....	....	....	500	500
Binders.....	....	58	2,635	2,748
Total indirect issues.....	....	58	3,185	3,243
Total direct issues.....	....	853	129,222	130,075
Total issues for 1919.....	....	911	132,407	133,318

Direct additions:

Manufacture.....	....	950	91,000	91,950
From other Bible Societies.....	35	368	33,978	34,381
Total direct additions.....	35	1,318	124,978	126,331

Indirect additions:

From binders.....	....	50	2,709	2,759
Total additions to stock.....	35	1,368	127,687	129,090

Circulation by Districts

Sales:

	Bibles	Test's	Portions	Total
Bangkok.....	99	317	8,932	9,348
Chiengmai.....	....	139	....	139
Chiengrai.....	....	39	....	39
Nakon Patom.....	....	16	2,030	2,046
Petchaburi.....	3	40	702	745
Sritamarat.....	....	8	313	321
Total sales.....	102	559	11,977	12,638

Donations:

Bangkok.....	....	....	2,282	2,282
Prae.....	....	....	30,694	30,694
Chiengmai.....	....	....	25,840	25,840
Chiengrai.....	....	....	18,810	18,810
Total donations.....	....	....	77,626	77,626
Total sales.....	102	559	11,977	12,638
Total circulation.....	102	559	89,603	90,264

Details of Circulation by Language

Siamese.....	9,218	Hindi.....	1
Siamo-Lao (diglot).....	4,019	Tamil.....	2
Lao.....	69,836	Urdu.....	1
Kamu.....	45	Singhalese.....	2
Laotien.....	1	Malay (Arabic).....	8
Cambodian.....	151	Malay Baba.....	11
Chinese, Wenli.....	6,576	Malay (Roman).....	1
Cantonese.....	250	Gurumukki.....	2
Tie-Chiu (Roman)....	5	Javanese.....	2
Hainanese ".....	1	English.....	104
Hakka.....	13	Welsh.....	1
Shanghai.....	1	Danish.....	2
Japanese.....	1	German.....	2
Talaing or Mon (Pegu)....	2	French.....	1
Burmese.....	3	Spanish.....	1
Bengali.....	2	Braille.....	1
Total.....			90,264